

September 2004

Expanding the ILL Role -- Interlibrary Loan Contributing to Collection Development

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Recommended Citation

Reed, Catherine A. (2004) "Expanding the ILL Role -- Interlibrary Loan Contributing to Collection Development," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 16: Iss. 4, Article 13.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4394>

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Food for Thought — from page 42

Despite their very different topics, both these encyclopedias — and, we hope, all our offerings — have a broad appeal and relevance. Consider the topic the seed of an encyclopedia.

Once it has been determined and the schedule set, the publisher's role is to nurture it with the ingredients of information quality: *vision*, *validity*, and *voice*.

Vision

Vision may not be what people first associate with an encyclopedia, unless it's the vision — or obsession — of a single lone researcher who slaves for decades, like **Samuel Johnson** or **James Murray**, the tireless lexicographer whose labors brought us the **OED**. Today, knowledge doesn't stand still for long enough to be gathered by that method. Our means of sharing knowledge are changing all the time, and today's great reference works are the creation of extensive networks of experts brought together by publishers who provide financial support and practical expertise.

Quality comes from a clear vision: clarity of purpose, an understanding of what a new book or series will do for a particular audience. Vision also encompasses the creators' understanding of how their particular project fits into both the larger and the more particularistic scheme of things.

Vision makes a difference in a variety of

ways. When your vision is clear, it becomes easier to recruit top scholars. We have made a minor specialty of creating encyclopedias in new areas — defining the field of environmental history, or leadership, or community. I know we're getting it right when those we invite to contribute respond with, "I don't usually write for encyclopedias but this is something different. What an ambitious, important project."

Vision also creates a sense of urgency that goes well beyond the business need to create a product quickly. Both the publisher and the librarian who buys the work ought to be able to see, and explain, the special value and utility of the new publication. What does it do differently and better? Does it offer unique syntheses within a familiar field? Does it give us a new perspective on a standard subject (sociology, say), or take us into an area that is going to be vitally important in the future. (Something we tried to accomplish in the soon to be released *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*.)

There is plenty of excellent, solid reference that can hardly be called visionary. My contention is, however, that competition from free online sources is going to make utilitarian reference increasingly difficult to sell, while distinctive publications will become the reference resources that will succeed alongside, and as part of, the Web.

Validity

Reference works vary enormously, but all can be assessed by the validity of their content.

The publisher is responsible for assembling consistent, accurate, comparable information and putting it together in a way that makes sense.

To do this, publishers make dozens of choices, some conscious and some not. Berkshire's business choices are conscious — and will be made more transparent in Part II of this article — but many of the choices that create validity are unconscious. One way to improve reference is to become more explicit about what we're promising, what standards we're setting for ourselves and our writers.

Coverage is a key part of validity. We want our content to be varied — but always logical and consistent. Decisions about what to include in an encyclopedia can take months, and ideally new decisions should be made up through the time a project goes to press. But there are always misses. "Light Pollution," for example, is an article we wish we'd included in the *Encyclopedia of World Environmental History* (Routledge 2004). Somehow we never included "Ancient Greece" in our early lists of articles for *World History*, perhaps because it doesn't get much special attention today from world historians. We struggled to find an author who could do it justice and provide the synthesis needed — not just an article about ancient Greece, but one that would explain its influence on the world over the past two thousand years. (Fortunately for us, senior editor **William H. McNeill** stepped in to do the job.) The network, or fishing net, of relationships we develop in the course of a project can provide important new ideas and catch embarrassing omissions.

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ATG Special Report — Acquisitions and ILL: Part II

Guest Edited by **Michelle Flinchbaugh** (Acquisitions Librarian, Albin O. Kuhn Library, University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), 100 Hilltop Cir., Baltimore, MD 21250; Phone: 410-455-6754; Fax: 410-455-1598) <flinchba@umbc.edu>

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Expanding the ILL Role — Interlibrary Loan Contributing to Collection Development

by **Catherine A. Reed** (Coordinator of Interlibrary Services and Reference Librarian, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 27187) <careed@wm.edu>

Introduction and Background

In an academic environment, interlibrary loan is an integral part of student and faculty research and thus can be considered a natural extension of the library's collection. Interlibrary loan's role has always been to fill that immediate research need. Periodically, ILL is asked for summary reports to help identify gaps in library collections or subject areas with high usage. These traditional methods of working together with Collection Development only go so far. We decided to investigate other options described in the literature. In our pilot project to selectively purchase monographs, we are not looking to circumvent ILL, but to look at long range ways to expand ILL's role of improving

access to information and in the long run improving our library collection.

The **College of William & Mary** in Williamsburg, Virginia serves approximately 7500 students and offers degrees through the doctoral level. The **Earl Gregg Swem Library** is the central library on campus and contains more than 1.2 million monographic volumes. **William & Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law** and the **Virginia Institute of Marine Science** have their own ILL Departments and are not included in this study.

Demand for ILL materials in **Swem Library** has steadily increased and in 2002-2003, the department handled almost 37,000 requests, for both borrowing and lending. 11,000 of these

were requests from our faculty and students for items not held in **Swem Library**. Our Acquisitions department relies heavily on approval plans to fulfill a large portion of **Swem's** collection development needs. This is verified by the fact that only eight university press titles with 2003 imprints were ordered through ILL in the last year. ILL identifies those titles not covered by the approval plan.

Review of Literature

The literature addresses the issue of opting to purchase interlibrary loan requests, calling it buy vs. borrow, just-in-time acquisitions, books on demand, etc. The **University of Virginia** has successfully incorporated a Purchase Ex-

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press program to expedite book requests. Clendenning describes how patrons use a special link from the library's homepage, separate from any ILL links, to request that books be purchased. Users are choosing the option to purchase or to use ILL (with staff making the final decision on the method of acquisition). Two hundred requests per month are generated this way.¹

Hulsey describes, from a public library perspective, that purchasing on demand shrinks ILL. At his public library in Michigan academic type ILL requests were reduced to about three times a week. Most purchases in his program were for fiction and biography titles. Obviously this would not be our circumstance but it was interesting to note that he says the methodology used for this service is similar to what is used for regular purchases.²

Using nine years of data from Bucknell University, Perdue and Fleet describe in-depth, a cost analysis study, a repeat circulation study and ILL statistics. They conclude that with the ARL/RLG cost study estimate of \$18-30 per borrowing transaction, rush ordered monographs will pay for themselves if they circulated 3+ times. Their circulation statistics for these materials averaged 4.5 circulations per book. Firm order purchases only averaged 2.4 circulations. This cost effective system had the side benefit of reducing ILL's workload; book borrowing was down 25%.³

Ward outlines criteria and procedures for their six month pilot project at Purdue University. Interestingly, to expedite delivery of materials, Amazon shipped the books directly to the ILL office. The staff stamped them with their property stamp and processed them as an ILL. When the item was returned it was then added to the collection. They also included a bookmark questionnaire for patrons to submit their comments.⁴

Rottman brings up an interesting, while negative, point that cannot be foreseen prior to ordering. Many books are ordered via ILL in the hopes that they will be useful but the patron won't know that until they look at it.⁵

These articles offer suggestions and confirm with data that a program of purchasing newer imprint monographs would be beneficial to both the patron and the library.

Data Analysis

How feasible would it be for us to institute a similar program? The first step was to examine our borrowing requests. How many requests could potentially be ordered? What criteria would we use? What limits would we create? Dollar amount? Requestor status? Need by date? (if need by date is too soon, would we request it on ILL and then still obtain for the collection?)

Data from the Spring and Fall 2003 semesters was gathered and examined. All loan requests that had an imprint of 2001, 2002, or 2003 were extracted from ILLiad, our ILL resource management software system. These years were chosen in the hopes that the books would still

be readily available at Amazon.com. Table 1 compares the Spring and Fall 2003 semesters. The percent of titles available through Amazon held steady at a little more than 68% while the

number of titles increased substantially in the Fall semester. The dollar amounts were a bit surprising and for a pilot project, \$17,000 seemed like more than we were looking to spend.

Table 1

Requests:	SPRING 2003	FALL 2003
Titles eligible	135	307
Avail. at Amazon	93	210
% available	68.9%	68.4%
Amazon \$ amount	\$4,870.36	\$12,351.51
# books over \$100	8 (\$1688.64)	24 (\$3652.04)

Next, to scale back the scope of the project, only 2003 imprints were extracted. Table 2 illustrates this data. With newer imprints, it wasn't surprising that the percentage of titles available at Amazon increased slightly to 75%. More importantly, the dollar amount was only \$2,859. With a substantial amount of our collection development budget committed to approval plans,

this was more in the range of what we could reasonably expend. Workflow and staffing issues for both the ILL and Acquisitions departments must also be taken into consideration. Two hundred and ten rush requests, just from ILL, in a semester (Fall 2003) could be burdensome while 60 would have less of a departmental impact.

Table 2

Requests:	FALL 2003	FALL 2003- 2003 imprints only
Titles eligible	307	80
Avail. at Amazon	210	60
% available	68.4%	75%
Amazon \$ amount	\$12,351.51	\$2,859.94
# books over \$100	24 (\$3,652.04)	5 (\$748.51)

Procedures

In discussions with the Acquisitions Librarian, the Coordinator of Collection Development and the ILL Librarian, it was decided that ILL would expand its role and forward ILL loan requests for current year imprints to collection development for purchase.

Procedures:

- an Interlibrary Loan request is submitted from our faculty/staff/students.

- ILL staff will route any current year imprints to a special "Awaiting Collection Development Processing" queue in ILLiad.

- Staff or ILL librarian will check Amazon.com for availability.

- if it's in Amazon.com but is out of print or backordered, re-route request to be processed for ILL.

- Book order form is filled out. Patron notification information and need by date is included on the form.

- Book order form is given to the Coordinator for Collection Development for approval or veto. If approved, the order is given to Acquisitions for priority handling and ordering through Amazon.com using our institutional account. If vetoed, the order comes back to ILL for processing. It was agreed this step must happen without delay.

At this point the ILL request is cancelled in ILLiad and the patron is notified that the book will be purchased for our collection. As a priority order, processing is expedited and the pa-

tron will be notified by the Circulation Department when it is ready for check out.

At this time there is much uncertainty as to how long this process will take from start to finish. ILL will closely monitor these requests and in the initial stages will only submit requests that have extended need by dates. Many of our faculty and graduate students need materials by the end of a semester and this would allow ample time, with room to spare.

Follow Up

As with any new program, evaluation along the way and after a designated period of time is necessary. ILL will track all orders for 2004. If turnaround time is slower than ILL's turnaround time for loans, Ward's procedure where the books are shipped directly to ILL may be implemented. Each summer (with summer being a slower time for the ILL department), beginning with the summer of 2005, we will check the circulation records for the book orders from this pilot project. It will be important to see if the usage supports the literature's claim of repeat usage. Pertinent information such as status of the requester will be noted in this evaluation. Our faculty can check out materials for one year so we wouldn't expect higher circulations so soon in this case. The evaluation will be instrumental in deciding if we should continue the program. Should we expand it? How much money is needed for that?

We expect our patrons will appreciate the longer loan times, the ability to renew according to our library's policies, and if they need it again, it is readily available.


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was received with enthusiasm throughout the library community, for some obvious reasons: because of their age and fragility, many of the works scanned and delivered through **dd-ILL** would not otherwise have circulated, so use of digital surrogates not only helped to preserve these works from excessive handling — more importantly for non-Stanford users, it created much better opportunities for access to rare and unique content.

The project workflow was fairly simple: any request coming in to regular ILL that met our **dd-ILL** selection criteria (out-of-copyright monograph) was routed to **dd-ILL**, where our staff paged the book, sought permission of the cognizant curator or of Special Collections staff if the book was fragile, then scanned and converted the book to PDF for delivery. Of course, only non-destructive scanning methods were used: the primary tool for this was an overhead (planetary) book scanner. PDF was chosen as the delivery file format² because it is both ubiquitous and neatly-packaged (and thus easily delivered); we employed uncorrected optical character recognition (OCR) to make the PDF both more or less easy to create, and more or less searchable; and we chose the “image plus hidden text” PDF format so that, no matter what the OCR accuracy rate (which was always far too low for plain-text output), the user could see a page image as close as possible to the pa-

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This is a work in progress. **Swem Library's** Interlibrary Loan, Collection Development and Acquisitions departments have made a commitment to work together, to improve access, service and our library's collection. Traditional ILL, while filling the immediate information need, does nothing to improve a library's collection. A collaborative project such as this, however small to start out with, is a move in the right direction. 

Endnotes

1. Lynda Fuller Clendinning, “Purchase Express for any user request,” *College & Research Libraries News* 62, no.1 (January 2001): 16-17.
2. Richard Hulsey, “Purchase on demand: a better custom service model,” *Library Journal* 128, no.10 (June 1, 2003): 77.
3. Jennifer Perdue and James A. Van Fleet, “Borrow or buy: cost-effective delivery of monographs,” *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Information Supply* 9, no.4 (1999): 19-28.
4. Suzanne M. Ward, “Books on demand: just-in-time acquisitions,” *Acquisitions Librarian* 27 (2002): 95-107.
5. F.K. Rottmann, “To buy or to borrow: studies of the impact of interlibrary loan on collection development in the academic library,” *Journal of Interlibrary Loan & Information Supply* 1, no.3 (1991): 17-27.

per original. When the PDF file was created and basic quality control completed, we moved it to a designated space on our own Web server, then informed the requesting library of a URL where the file could be retrieved. This URL was intended to remain constant, both for the delivery of the ILL request and for eventual integration into the digital library collection. Within a relatively brief period of time after “delivery” to ILL patrons, these same URLs were driven into our catalog (and matched to the catalog record for the print original) in order to facilitate seamless discovery via mainstream tools, and direct access to the digital surrogate.

Although we experienced occasional delays due to staff learning curves and to rough edges in our processes and technologies, we still met our goal of efficient ILL practice with rather striking consistency: throughout the project, the average time from initial request to desktop delivery was five to seven days, well within the norms of traditional interlibrary loan.

dd-ILL and Digital Collection Development

Aside from the creation of an innovative delivery method for handling ILL requests, one of the fundamental principles of **dd-ILL**, was the establishment of a new tool to augment **Stanford's** digital library collection: *vox populi*. This collection of scanned books is thus unique in its scope and focus: because the books were all requested through interlibrary loan, we assumed that they are both not widely held in American libraries, and of particular interest to current researchers — otherwise, it is not likely that they would have been requested through ILL in the first place.

Although **Stanford** now has greatly expanded and automated a book digitization program that supports a large number of projects, each with its own selection principles, the **dd-ILL** project was our first to concentrate on out-of-copyright monographs; indeed, although the out-of-copyright designation was initially chosen simply to avoid rights and intellectual property issues, we later acknowledged its value as a principle of digital collection development, and have undertaken a newer project to digitize general out-of-copyright holdings in the Libraries. The **dd-ILL** corpus is being integrated into this larger collection.

How, then, did the composition of this “democratically selected” digital collection turn out? Just under half the titles are in languages other than English. The vast majority are in the humanities and social sciences, and of these about 35% came from Special Collections. We suspect that the reasons for this are related both to the relative longevity of works in these fields and to the out-of-copyright element of our digitization selection criteria. A different, and unexpectedly important, subset of our **dd-ILL** collection was a direct result of our out-of-copyright selection criteria: a significant number of requests came directly via our **Earth Sciences Library** for unpublished theses, dissertations, and field reports from a science discipline in which older research largely retains its value over time. Although these titles constituted only about 6% of the total, this was about three times more than from all other science and engineering branch libraries combined.

As for the age of this collection, imprint dates of digitized titles ranged from 1574 almost to the present; the vast majority, more than 90% of titles, are pre-1923. (The remaining 10% were selected for digitization based on other “out-of-copyright” principles, such as the public domain nature of government documents, **Stanford** or **Stanford**-affiliated intellectual property such as theses and technical reports, and a few non-U.S. publications that are in the public domain in their countries of publication.) About 25% of the total were published between 1900 and 1923; about 50% from 1800 to 1899; just under 10% from 1700-1799; and about 5% from the late 16th and 17th centuries.

Cataloging, Discovery and Access

Ironically, today's digital library environment is generally still quite limited in true cross-collection searching opportunities. Significant bodies of digital material are still discoverable only within their respective information silos, each with its own search apparatus. For a startlingly large quantity of digital library resources, in order for a patron to find what she wants, she must first know which database, digital collection or e-book service her desired title is in. While the standard online catalog may seem passé in some digital Utopian sense, it still provides far and away the best opportunity for discovery of electronic resources.

Fortunately for our **dd-ILL** collection, as for any collection of digital surrogates of existing print materials, the existing catalog record provides by far the simplest, most complete, and most direct discovery interface for our patrons. For all of these reasons, after **dd-ILL** patrons were notified of their “pickup” URL, we simply batch-loaded these same URLs into the corresponding catalog records, where they can be searched as a collection (using the keyword “**dd-ILL**,” which appears as part of each URL in the record), or — much more likely from a user's point of view — discovered spontaneously and serendipitously as the result of a standard search. Instead of a user first wanting “something digital” then going “somewhere digital” to find it (obviously not a likely scenario), the **dd-ILL** files are immediately discoverable (and deliverable) to anyone searching a particular author or title (which happens thousands of times a day).

Approximately 23% of the total digitized titles have print originals housed in remote storage; 30% of the total are in (non-circulating) Special Collections and 10% of the total in locked-stack or other non-circulating collections — thus well over half of the titles which are of limited access in print form, even to **Stanford** users, are now immediately available to them as digital surrogates, directly via the catalog. These 600+ digitized, limited-access titles are, of course, just a tiny drop in the eight-million volume bucket of the **Stanford Libraries**. But the fact that these titles are to some degree both user-selected and access-restricted makes this drop a rather concentrated one.

Conclusions

Although **Stanford's** Digital Delivery of Interlibrary Loan program has been on hiatus since 2003, it has survived in spirit: many of its principles and practices, especially in the realm

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